

Academic censorship by Israel

by **Jacqueline O'Rourke**
(CUP) **The Muse**

For years the public has continuously been confused about the intense conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians. For years words such as Zionism, Judaism and the PLQ have penetrated political and non-political conversations alike and gradually have developed extreme connotations. For years the fighting has continued and persecution prospered.

Today the myths and realities have been incorporated into one confusing maze of death, suffering and suppression and often it is difficult for one to know where to place the blame. Yet amongst all this confusion one reality stands out, especially to fellow students;

that is the incredible suppression of academic freedom in the Israeli occupied territories which include the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, Golan and Lebanon. Increased Israeli control over Palestinian education has led to the closing down of universities, the imprisonment of students and even the deportation of university staff members. The military order number 854, which grants the Israeli military immense powers, is largely responsible for such suppression.

The Military Order number 854 enable the Israeli military to exert an enormous amount of pressure on Palestinian educational institutions. Under this order the Israeli military has the power to issue and revoke

annual licenses to post-secondary institutions. Thus the security of the continuing operation of the Palestinian academic world lies in the hands of the Israeli military. As well the military controls the recruitment and dismissal of

teachers and may deny them their certificates for political reasons. A "Loyalty Oath" is often used as a condition for a work permit where the Palestinian must denounce the PLQ.

Furthermore, the military has the power to control development programs and may refuse to issue permits required to add departments, colleges, buildings and new programs (as in the case of Bethlehem University). Cen-

the centre of Palestinian culture and folklore. It is the most prominent in the Palestinian academic world and manages to accomplish not only academic aims but the preservation of a unique and historic culture.

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sorship of reading material' is within the power of the Israeli military according to the order and in 1981 alone 3000 books were banned. Finally it is perfectly 'legal' for the Israeli military to impose custom duties and taxes on educational materials used in Palestinian universities while exempting Israeli universities from these same duties and taxes. Indeed the powers allotted to the

BZU was closed for seven months in 1981 and for the most of 1982 after a student demonstration over Israel's appointment of a civilian in charge of the West Bank. BZU students paid for such a demonstration with the shut-down of their university, the deportation of 22 Palestinian and foreign faculty members and dismissal of 13 professors holding foreign passports who refused to

Students and teachers arranged secret meetings.

Israeli military are many and the military order number 854 is a practiced method that paralyzes Palestinian academic freedom.

The Israeli military has exerted the powers given to it by Order number 854 many times and one dominant example is the shut-down of the Birzeit University (BZU). BZU is located 25 kilometers north of Jerusalem in the Israeli-occupied West Bank Palestine. BZU is recognized as

sign the Loyalty Oath.

During the shut-down students who were determined to continue with their educational goals had to succumb to an 'underground' education. Students and teachers arranged secret meetings to continue course instruction. While 80 per cent of the scheduled courses were completed during the summer the task was a tedious one. The problems of organizing

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